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Members of the Landfill Advisory Committee
Department of Environmental Services
Refuse Division, Planning and Engineering Branch
1000 Uluohia Street, Suite 201
Kapolei, Hawai‘i 96707

RE: LAC Meeting #7, Monday, April 4, 2022, 2:00 p.m. via Videoconference

April 4, 2022

Aloha Landfill Advisory Committee,

First, I would like to thank each of you for volunteering your time and energy to provide guidance on this tough topic. Any site suggested by this committee will be met with opposition. Landfills are a wicked problem, and no site will be without negative impacts. Thank you for taking on this role anyway. This work is not straightforward and you all are being asked to weigh a series of imperfect scenarios.

I am writing to share some considerations for this committee. I have (3) suggestions/comments and (1) conceptual seed I would like to plant in the hopes that generations down the line do not find themselves in the position we are in today.

Suggestions/Comments:

1. Please do not select a site that is on (a) prime agricultural land and (b) over any drinking water source above the Board of Water Supply’s “no pass zone”. This committee should advocate to the LUC for an extension of the site selection process so that additional options that are not currently on the table can be explored, including federal lands.

There is not a single ecosystem function or land-use classification we should sacrifice for the purpose of burying trash, however the opportunity costs that are currently on the table are a public disservice. The opportunity cost of placing the landfill on prime agricultural lands is that we decrease our much-needed capacity for local food production. The opportunity cost of placing the landfill within the Board of Water Supply’s “no pass zone” is that we will knowingly place our drinking water at



risk. In the wake of the Red Hill disaster, even considering a site that may harm our drinking water feels like a threat to the public interest.

2. The closure of the current Waimanalo Gulch before the site has reached capacity needs to be reconsidered. I request that this committee seriously explore and suggest this as an option by challenging the LUC’s decision. There is at least another decade of life left in that landfill, and the rush to close it is causing us to consider bad options.

There is not a single community that should have to bear the burden of hosting a landfill for the island and it needs to be noted that most of our energy and waste management infrastructure has become the burden of the land and people on our leeward coastline. For this reason, the next landfill should not be considered on the leeward side of O‘ahu.

And, closing the landfill before it has reached capacity—and after it has been upgraded with the latest storm water and pollution prevention infrastructure—is not in the best interest of anyone on this island. It is unfair for the landfill to be on the westside, and it will also be detrimental to move it preemptively.

3. I disagree with the placement of ecosystem and cultural impacts as “subjective” scoring criteria in the site ranking process. These impacts can be measured, and are therefore not subjective.

Conceptual Consideration:

Conversations around waste management infrastructure need to be interwoven with concurrent conversations about how to reduce the amount of waste we manage.

The money we spend, the land uses we sacrifice, the communities and ecosystems we put at risk, and the climate impacts we face for the sake of making and tossing unnecessary rubbish are absurd.

We can create a different system. One without over packaged convenience items and toxic discards.. And that system will result in less waste to burn or bury on our agricultural lands, over our water, in our forests, or near people’s homes.

And yet we continue to choose and uphold policies, business practices, and lifestyles that create unnecessary waste.

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My hope is for a future where we have as few landfills (or incinerators or recycling operations) as possible because we will have done the good work of reducing our rubbish. Acting on waste reduction TODAY is the single most important thing we can do to decrease the burden of waste management on the land, water, and people of Hawai‘i.

I hope this process creates waste reduction advocates out of everyone on this committee and I wholeheartedly thank you for taking on this wicked task.

With respect and appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "NCH", followed by a horizontal line.

Nicole Chatterson, Executive Director, Zero Waste O‘ahu

